

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ENRG, UR

SUBJECT: SHORTCOMINGS IN SOVIET OIL AND GAS EXPLORATION

1. EKONOMICHESKAYA GAZETA (NO. 28) DISCUSSES CONTINUING SHORTCOMINGS OF SOVIET EXPLORATION OF NEW OIL AND GAS DEPOSITS. IF DISCOVERY OF NEW RESERVES IS TO KEEP PACE WITH EXPANDING PRODUCTION, THE ARTICLE ARGUES, RELATIVELY UNEXPLORED AREAS MUST BE SEARCHED MUCH MORE CONSISTENTLY.

2. THE ARTICLE WAS CO-AUTHORED BY V. KRYMOV, DEPUTY CHIEF OF THE OIL AND GAS EXPLORATION ADMINISTRATION OF THE GEOLOGY MINISTRY AND T. ROMANOVSKAYA OF THE ALL-UNION INSTITUTE OF THE ECONOMICS OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND GEOLOGICAL EXPLORATION. IT FOCUS IS THE LONG-STANDING LACK OF GEOPHYSICAL PROSPECTING AND EXPLORATORY DRILLING IN REGIONS FAR FROM KNOWN OIL AND GAS DEPOSITS. SUCH WORK--GENERALLY EQUIVALENT TO "WILDCAT" OPERATIONS IN THE US--IS SCHEDULED TO INCREASE IN VOLUME DURING THE TENTH FIVE-YEAR PLAN TO ALMOST THREE TIMES THAT OF 1971-75.

3. HOWEVER, THE AUTHORS INDICATE THAT EXPLORATION IS STILL

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PLAGUED BY SERIOUS SHORTCOMINGS. UNTIL SOPHISTICATED GEOPHYSICAL MAPPING TECHNOLOGY AND OTHER IMPROVED EQUIPMENT BECOMES WIDELY AVAILABLE TO EXPLORATION CREWS, MOST EXPLORATORY WORK WILL REMAIN CONCENTRATED IN AREAS NEAR KNOWN DEPOSITS, WHERE ADDITIONAL LARGE RESERVES ARE UNLIKELY TO BE FOUND. THE AUTHORS BLAME SEVERAL SOVIET MINISTRIES FOR NOT SUPPLYING THE DIGITAL COMPUTERS AND

SUPPORT EQUIPMENT NEEDED FOR MAPPING OF DEEP STRUCTURES IN NEW REGIONS. THEY ALSO COMPLAIN ABOUT THE CONTINUING LACK OF COORDINATION BETWEEN THE MINISTRIES OF OIL, GAS AND GEOLOGY IN PLANNING FOR SUFFICIENT GEOPHYSICAL WORK.

4. COMMENT: THE ARTICLE ESSENTIALLY REVIEWS OLD PROBLEMS. IT DOES REFLECT, HOWEVER, THE GROWING SOVIET CONCERN WITH DECLINING EXPLORATION RESULTS--PARTICULARLY FOR OIL--AND THE REALIZATION THAT SUBSTANTIAL IMPROVEMENTS ARE NEEDED BOTH TECHNOLOGICALLY AND ORGANIZATIONALLY.
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Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
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